

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 01809 071627Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 PM-04 INR-07
CIAE-00 DODE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 USIA-06 /058 W
-----088606 072301Z /72

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4887
AMEMBASSY BONN
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1809

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, WB, UK, UR, US, FR
SUBJECT: RUDOLF HESS: BRITISH PROPOSAL

REF: BONN 11216

SUMMARY: WE SHARE BONN'S ASSESSMENT THAT UK
PROPOSAL REPORTED REFTEL NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED.
HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT SO CONVINCED THAT IT IS ILL-
ADVISED. WE CONCUR IN BONN'S RECOMMENDATION THAT
BRITISH NOT BE DISSUADED FROM HAVING AMBASSADOR WRIGHT
MAKE A UNILATERAL APPROACH TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR
ABRASIMOV. WE WOULD SUGGEST, IN ADDITION, THAT US
BONN GROUP REP MAKE CLEAR TO BRITISH THAT WE WOULD
NOT BE PLEASED IF THE BRITISH FCO HAS ANY INTENTION
OF MAKING PUBLIC THE TERMS OR RESULTS OF THIS APPROACH.
END SUMMARY.

1. WE BELIEVE UK PROPOSAL TO OFFER HESS AN OPPORTUNITY
TO REPENT IS NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED. FOR SUCCESS, IT
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REQUIRES THE COOPERATION NOT ONLY OF ABRASIMOV, BUT
ALSO OF RUDOLF HESS HIMSELF. THAT IS TO SAY, EVEN
IF ABRASIMOV AGREES TO PERMITTING A DISCUSSION ON
REPENTANCE BETWEEN HESS SR. AND JR., THE FATHER MAY NOT
WISH TO DISCUSS THE POINT. FURTHER, IF RUDOLF HESS
WERE TO REPENT, WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THIS WOULD
MOTIVATE THE SOVIETS TO AGREE TO HIS RELEASE.

2. THAT HAVING BEEN SAID, WE SEE NO RISK IN AN APPROACH TO ABRASIMOV ON THIS POINT. THE APPROACH WOULD BE PRIVATE, ABRASIMOV COULD EASILY SAY NO AND END THE MATTER. HOWEVER, THERE IS THE FAINT POSSIBILITY THAT HE EITHER WOULD AGREE OR AT LEAST GIVE US FURTHER INSIGHT INTO THE SOVIET POSITION ON RELEASE OF HESS. THE KEY POINT, IN OUR VIEW, IS THAT RISK OF ADVERSE SOVIET REACTION IS VIRTUALLY NIL IF THE MATTER IS KEPT PRIVATE. GIVEN THAT THIS PROPOSED APPROACH IS THE RESULT OF PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY PRESSURE ON HMG, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE FCO WILL FEEL OBLIGED TO MAKE PUBLIC THE TERMS AND RESULTS OF THE APPROACH. THAT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY ELICIT SOME NEGATIVE REACTION FROM SOVIETS, WHICH MIGHT BE DIRECTED AT RUDOLF HESS.

3. WOLF-RUEDIGER HESS IS ANOTHER VARIABLE IN THE EQUATION. IF HESS SR. IS OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPENT IN HIS SON'S PRESENCE (WHICH WOULD ALSO BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE FOUR SPANDAU GOVERNORS WHO MONITOR ALL SUCH MEETINGS), ONE CANNOT READILY ANTICIPATE WHAT THE SON WOULD DO WITH THE INFORMATION (WHICH COULD BE REPENTANCE, NON-REPENTANCE, OR SOMETHING IN BETWEEN). ONE CAN ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE FATHER REPENTS AND THE SOVIETS IGNORE THAT REPENTANCE, THE SON WILL SEEK MAXIMUM PUBLICITY.
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PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT MOST BERLINERS AND MANY GERMANS WOULD PAY LITTLE HEED TO SUCH PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS; BUT THE ALLIES, ESPECIALLY THE BRITISH, WOULD HAVE TO DEAL WITH MORE PRESS INQUIRIES. THERE LIES THE MAIN RISK WHICH WE CAN FORESEE, A BRITISH DESIRE TO TELL ALL IN DETAIL WHICH THE SOVIETS MIGHT CONSIDER OFFENSIVE; HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THE MATTER WOULD GET THAT FAR. WE DOUBT ABRASIMOV WILL AGREE TO THE DISCUSSION.
GEORGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Sent Date: 07-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: GS
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